

*Have you ever left a gathering of people feeling like you had hit an inside-the-park home run with all of the uproar associated with it, but as you crossed home plate you had the uncertain nagging feeling that you had missed third base in your enthusiasm and the third baseman was just about to appeal to the umpire? This is something about how I feel sometimes; a vague idea that I said something wrong or hurt someone's feelings, but can't quite figure it out.*

I called him Amos, because when I found him he was taking care of a grove of trees<sup>1</sup>. He was binding up broken limbs in an effort to heal them, and even setting bent-over grasses up straight. I just had to ask him why he was doing this.

He gave me a somewhat sad look when he responded. "I've made a lot of mistakes," he told me. "I've been like a wild clumsy donkey running madly through this thicket, and have broken many branches and torn up the ground underneath the trees<sup>2</sup>. I have hurt the motherland, and now I regret it such that I am trying to make things right."

"It does look like a terrible storm has been through here," I said, looking at all of the signs of damage. But I thought about this in a different plane, one that had to do with relationships. And I thought about all of the branches I had broken – all of the people I have hurt in the past. How could I fix them? I was sure that I had broken some that I didn't even know about. It horrified me to think of how my movements could be tracked through the devastation that I had caused.

When I thought about all of the people I had interacted with in my past, I found different types of memories resurfacing. I remembered some who I cared about, and some who may have cared about me. The degree to which I care for certain people has changed throughout the years, and the number of people that probably care about what happened to me is decreasing rapidly as I get older.

I realize that back in my youth, I was sort of like the caterpillar entrenching myself in a cocoon. Now that I am a butterfly, I thought I should go back and try to re-connect to the ones I had hurt. I would like to be able to give us both closure and help with any healing that is needed<sup>3</sup> for these "broken branches." Whatever I did, I just want God to bless and heal them. I want for the broken branches to grow back again; I want to see them thriving and flowering in a luxuriously lush setting in their garden home.

I left Amos with his work, with a much better appreciation for the need to bind up the wounds<sup>4</sup> of others, even those that I had not hurt. I also decided to be more careful in my activities so that I could minimize the damage.

1. Amos was a dresser of sycamore trees, Amos 7:14
2. see Ezekiel 34:18 about muddying the waters
3. The ninth step of the twelve-step program is, "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."
4. God's work: "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds," Psalm 147:3

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Setting grasses straight; evidence of a large clumsy animal crashing through the underbrush

Many had grown back since being broken (or there were signs of this)

Thinking of all of the broken branches (people I hurt in the past)

Crashing wildly through the woods; book *Crashing Through* about a blind man

How can I fix them?

Some I don't even know that I broke

A:

Have you ever left a gathering of people feeling like you had hit an inside-the-park home run with all of the uproar associated with it, but as you crossed home plate you had the uncertain nagging feeling that you had missed third base in your enthusiasm and the third baseman was just about to appeal to the umpire. This is something about how I feel sometimes; a vague idea that I said something wrong or hurt someone's feelings.

Feeling invisible (story)

Part of my "nostalgia" phase, I think, has to do with the powerful sense of wonder at experiencing things the first few times; especially relationships (friends, etc.)

It was sad to think that someone could track my movements through the broken branches, torn / bent grass, and footprints

As I get older, I find my mind reaching back to my high school and college days...

Memories resurfacing

Who I cared about; who care about me

Some that I didn't really know that well,

It seems that the number of people that I think give a hoot about what happened to me (generally) is decreasing rapidly as I get older. Miscalculation in early days – high school syndrome; I didn't really know them; who do I want to re-connect with and find out how they are doing (and have done through the years)

12 steps; the ninth step: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Think of people as "broken branches"

[cocoon] Thinking of those who I may have hurt when I was in high school and later; Injuries to others from the cocoon – can the butterfly let them go?

Maintaining the identity throughout the transition process

Conclusion:

Worried that I might have hurt someone along the way; now I want God to bless them; one of the 12 steps